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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/679,861	10/06/2003	Craig Ogg	61135/P023US/10303235	3194
29053 7590 11/20/2007 FULBRIGHT & JAWORSKI L.L.P 2200 ROSS AVENUE SUITE 2800 DALLAS, TX 75201-2784			EXAMINER LIU, ERIC	
			ART UNIT 3628	PAPER NUMBER
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/679,861	Applicant(s) OGG, CRAIG	
	Examiner Eric Liou	Art Unit 3628	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 9/7/07.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13 and 15-33 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 23-28 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13, 15-22, and 29-33 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Status of Claims

1. Applicant has amended claims 1-4, 8-11, 15, 29-31, and 33 and canceled claim 14. Claims 23-28 are withdrawn from consideration due to Applicant's election in response to the restriction requirement made during the telephone interview on 8/28/07. Thus, claims 1-13 and 15-33 remain pending.

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's arguments filed 9/7/07 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.
3. **Regarding claims 1, 8, 15, and 29**, Applicant argues, "the applied art teaches universal parameters limiting a meter whereby every user using the meter is limited by the same parameters." The Examiner notes, the claims do not recite that every user is not limited by the same parameters. As noted by Applicant, amended claim 1 recites "a processor operable to access said authorization database and limit each user of said plurality of user's ability to evidence postage using the meter in accordance with corresponding ones of the parameters of said authorization database." The phrase "corresponding ones of the parameters" includes all or a portion of the parameters stored in memory. It is noted that Liechti teaches that each meter is imposed with the parameter set including a postage amount limit, a time limit, and a piece limit (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-7). Thus, Liechti teaches each user's ability to evidence postage using the meter is in accordance with corresponding ones of the parameters. Liechti does not teach storing parameters for a plurality of users. However, Ryan (U.S. Publication No. 2002/0026430) teaches storing mail account information for each of a plurality of customers (Ryan: Fig. 1,

“134”; paragraph 0028). The combination of Liechti in view of Ryan teaches all of the limitations of claim 1. See art rejection below. Applicant’s arguments for claims 8, 15, and 29 are similar to those of claim 1, which are addressed above.

Claim Objections

4. Claim 1 is objected to because of the following informalities: The phrase “users ability” should be changed to “users’ ability” in line 4. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 1-5, 7-11, 13, and 29-33 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Liechti et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,715,164 in view of Ryan, JR., U.S. Publication No. 2002/0026430.

6. **As per claim 1**, Liechti teaches a postage evidencing meter comprising:
an authorization database for storing parameters for a user (Liechti: Fig. 2, “220”, “230”, and “240”; col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5, lines 5-9), wherein the parameters separately limit the user’s ability to evidence postage using the meter (Liechti: col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5, lines 5-9), wherein limits on each user’s ability to evidence postage provided by said parameters are in

addition to a total amount of postage available from said postage evidencing meter (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 34-67); and

a processor operable to access said authorization database and limit each user of said plurality of users' ability to evidence postage using the meter in accordance with corresponding ones of the parameters of said authorization database (Liechti: Fig. 1, "103"; Fig. 2, "201"; col. 3, lines 46-67; col. 5, lines 5-9 and 22-65).

7. Liechti does not teach storing separate information for each of a plurality of users.

8. Ryan teaches storing a plurality of customer account files in an account database in a mailpiece processing system (Ryan: Fig. 1, "134"; paragraphs 0022; 0028).

9. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the method of Liechti to have included storing separate information for each of a plurality of users as taught by Ryan for the advantage of providing a flexible postage metering system that can process mail for a plurality of customers.

10. **As per claim 2**, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the postage evidencing meter of claim 1 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameters include a maximum postage amount that a selected user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9, "postage amount limit").

11. **As per claim 3**, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the postage evidencing meter of claim 1 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameters include a period of time during which a selected user is allowed to use the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 33-55).

12. **As per claim 4**, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the postage evidencing meter of claim 1 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameters include: a maximum postage amount that a selected user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage over a selected period of time (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 33-55).

13. **As per claim 5**, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the postage evidencing meter of claim 1 as described above. Liechti further teaches the postage evidencing meter further comprising: a user interface (Liechti: Figure 2, “207” and “215”; col. 4, lines 4-10); a printer (Liechti: Figure 2, “250”; col. 4, lines 12-15); and a security module (Liechti: Figure 2, “250”; col. 4, lines 15-17).

14. **As per claim 7**, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the postage evidencing meter of claim 1 as described above. Liechti further teaches the authorization database is coupled to the meter via a communication link to a remote postage information system (Liechti: Fig. 1; col. 5, lines 5-9 – The Examiner interprets data center 15 to be the remote postage information system.).

15. **As per claim 8**, Liechti teaches a system for controlling postage usage, comprising:
at least one postage evidencing meter having a communication module for providing a communication link between the postage evidencing meter and a postage information system (Liechti: Figures 1-2; col. 3, lines 46-67 – The Examiner interprets internal modem 205 to be the communication module and data center 15 to be a postage information system.), wherein the postage information system includes a database for storing postage usage parameters for a user (Liechti: Fig. 2, “220”, “230”, and “240”; col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5, lines 5-9), wherein the parameters separately limit the user's ability to evidence postage using the meter (Liechti: col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5, lines 5-9), said at least one postage evidencing meter having a processor operable to access said database through said communication module and separately limit the

user's ability to evidence postage in accordance with corresponding ones of said parameters (Liechti: Fig. 1, "103"; Fig. 2, "201"; col. 3, lines 46-67; col. 5, lines 5-9).

16. Liechti does not teach storing separate information for each of a plurality of users.

17. Ryan teaches storing a plurality of customer account files in an account database in a mailpiece processing system (Ryan: Fig. 1, "134"; paragraphs 0022; 0028).

18. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti to have included storing separate information for each of a plurality of users as taught by Ryan for the advantage of providing a flexible postage metering system that can process mail for a plurality of customers.

19. **As per claim 9**, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the system of claim 8 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameters include a maximum postage amount that a selected user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9, "postage amount limit").

20. **As per claim 10**, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the system of claim 8 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameters include a period of time during which a selected user is allowed to use the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 33-55).

21. **As per claim 11**, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the system of claim 8 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameters include: a maximum postage amount that a selected user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage during a selected period of time (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 33-55).

22. **As per claim 13**, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the system of claim 8 as described above. Liechti further teaches the communications link is a wireline link (Liechti: col. 3, lines 50-52).

23. **As per claim 29**, Liechti teaches a method for controlling postage usage comprising: storing postage usage parameters for a user in a postage usage database (Liechti: Figure 2, “220”, “230”, and “240”; col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5, lines 5-9), wherein said postage usage parameters establish postage evidencing limits for the user (Liechti: col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5, lines 5-9), said postage evidencing limits being independent of an available postage balance of a postage meter used for evidencing postage (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 34-67);

receiving a request to evidence postage from the selected user (Liechti: col. 7, lines 2-4; col. 12, lines 22-24; col. 13, lines 21-24 – The Examiner interprets the creation of a user account to be the result of a request received to evidence postage from a selected user.);

determining, based on the selected user’s postage usage parameters, if sufficient postage is available within a current period of time to fulfill the request for the selected user (Liechti: col. 5, lines 22-27 and 33-36; col. 7, lines 1-4 and 14-18);

determining if sufficient postage is available from the available postage balance of said postage meter used for evidencing postage to fulfill the request for the selected user (Liechti: col. 7, lines 1-4 and 14-18);

evidencing a requested postage amount if said determining determines that sufficient postage is available within the current period of time and if said determining determines that sufficient postage is available within the available postage balance (Liechti: col. 2, lines 38-41; col. 7, lines 4-6; col. 12, lines 22-24);

recording postage usage for the selected user in the postage usage database (Liechti: col. 7, lines 4-6; col. 12, lines 22-24); and

deducting an amount of postage used to fulfill the request for the selected user from the available postage balance (Liechti: col. 7, lines 4-6).

24. Liechti does not teach storing separate information for each of a plurality of users.

25. Ryan teaches storing a plurality of customer account files in an account database in a mailpiece processing system (Ryan: Fig. 1, "134"; paragraphs 0022; 0028).

26. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the method of Liechti to have included storing separate information for each of a plurality of users as taught by Ryan for the advantage of providing a flexible postage metering system that can process mail for a plurality of customers.

27. **As per claim 30**, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the method of claim 29 as described above. Liechti further teaches authenticating the selected user (Liechti: col. 7, lines 34-39).

28. **As per claim 31**, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the method of claim 29 as described above. Liechti further teaches receiving a request to configure parameters for the selected user (Liechti: col. 6, lines 62-67; col. 7, lines 1-9); and modifying postage usage limits in the postage usage database (Liechti: column 7, lines 4-9).

29. **As per claim 32**, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the method of claim 31 as described above. Liechti further teaches the usage limit is a maximum amount of postage that can be evidenced for the user (Liechti: col. 7, lines 6-9).

30. **As per claim 33**, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the method of claim 29 as described above. Liechti further teaches receiving a request to purchase postage for the selected user

(Liechti: col. 12, lines 22-24 – The Examiner interprets storing funds on the user's account to imply receiving a request to purchase postage.); and adding a purchased postage value to the postage usage database for the selected user (Liechti: col. 12, lines 22-24).

31. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Liechti et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,715,164 in view of Ryan, JR., U.S. Publication No. 2002/0026430 and further in view of Meadors et al., U.S. Publication No. 2004/0194154.

32. **As per claim 6**, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the postage evidencing meter of claim 1 as described above. Liechti further the authorization database (Liechti: Fig. 2, "220", "230", and "240"; col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5, lines 5-9). Liechti in view of Ryan does not teach a removable storage device.

33. Meadors teaches a removable storage device (Meadors: paragraph 0006).

34. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the postage evidencing meter of Liechti in view of Ryan to have included a removable storage device as taught by Meadors for the advantage of providing a postage system that is more versatile.

35. Claims 12 and 15-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Liechti et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,715,164 in view of Ryan, JR., U.S. Publication No. 2002/0026430 and further in view of Manduley, U.S. Publication No. 2004/0098354.

36. **As per claim 12**, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the system of claim 8 as described above. Liechti in view of Ryan does not teach the communication link is a wireless link.

37. Manduley teaches the communication link is a wireless link (Manduley: paragraph 0039).

38. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti in view of Ryan to have included the communication link is a wireless link as taught by Manduley for the advantage of providing a convenient way for postage meters to communicate with one another.

39. **As per claim 15**, Liechti teaches a system for controlling postage usage, comprising:
at least two postage evidencing meters (Liechti: Fig. 1; col. 3, lines 47-49), each meter having a processor and a communication module for providing a communication link (Liechti: Fig. 2, "201" and "205"; col. 3, lines 58-62), at least one postage evidencing meter of said at least two postage evidencing meters storing postage usage parameters for a user, wherein said postage usage parameters define different postage evidencing limits with respect to the user (Liechti: Figure 2, "220", "230", and "240"; col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5, lines 5-9 and 22-65), wherein postage usage parameters for the user are exchanged via the communication link (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9), and wherein the processor of the meter receiving said postage usage parameters controls the selected user's ability to evidence postage using the receiving meter in accordance with the received postage usage parameters (Liechti: Fig. 1, "103"; Fig. 2, "201"; col. 3, lines 46-67; col. 5, lines 5-9 and 22-65).

40. Liechti does not teach storing separate information for each of a plurality of users; and a communication link that allows for the exchange of information between at least two meters.

41. Ryan teaches storing a plurality of customer account files in an account database in a mailpiece processing system (Ryan: Fig. 1, "134"; paragraphs 0022; 0028).

42. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti to have included storing separate information for each of a plurality of users as taught by Ryan for the advantage of providing a flexible postage metering system that can process mail for a plurality of customers.

43. Liechti in view of Ryan does not teach a communication link that allows for the exchange of information between at least two meters.

44. Manduley teaches a communication link that allows for the exchange of information between at least two meters (Manduley: paragraph 0039).

45. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti in view of Ryan to have included a communication link that allows for the exchange of information between at least two meters as taught by Manduley for the advantage of effectively transmitting and updating data between meters without the need for connecting to a remote data center.

46. **As per claim 16**, Liechti in view of Ryan and further in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameters include a maximum postage amount that the selected user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 22-26).

47. **As per claim 17**, Liechti in view of Ryan and further in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameters include a maximum amount of postage that can be evidenced by the selected user during a selected period of time (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 33-55).

48. **As per claim 18**, Liechti in view of Ryan and further in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameters include: a maximum postage amount that the selected user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 22-26); and a period of time during which the selected user is allowed to use the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 33-55).

49. **As per claim 19**, Liechti in view of Ryan and further in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described above. Liechti in view of Ryan does not teach the communication link is a wireless link.

50. Manduley further teaches the communication link is a wireless link (Manduley: paragraph 0039).

51. It would have been prima facie obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti in view of Ryan and further in view of Manduley to have included the communication link is a wireless link as taught by Manduley for the advantage of providing a convenient way for postage meters to communicate with one another.

52. **As per claim 20**, Liechti in view of Ryan and further in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described above. Liechti further teaches the communications link is a wireline link (Liechti: col. 3, lines 50-52).

53. **As per claim 21**, Liechti in view of Ryan and further in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described above. Liechti further teaches using cryptographic techniques (Liechti: column 8, lines 17-29). Liechti in view of Ryan does not teach the communication link is used to transfer postage values securely between the at least two meters. Manduley further

teaches the communication link is used to transfer postage values securely between the at least two meters (Manduley: paragraphs 0030-0031).

54. It would have been prima facie obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti in view of Ryan and further in view of Manduley to have included the communication link is used to transfer postage values securely between the at least two meters as taught by Manduley for the advantage of effectively transmitting and updating data between meters without the need for connecting to a remote data center.

55. **As per claim 22**, Liechti in view of Ryan and further in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described above. Liechti further teaches the exchange of postage usage parameters (Liechti: column 5, lines 5-9). Liechti in view of Ryan does not teach an exchange between two meters is bi-directional. Manduley further teaches an exchange between two meters is bi-directional (Manduley: paragraphs 0034-0037 – The Examiner notes, one meter can send funds to another meter and vice versa.).

56. It would have been prima facie obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti in view of Ryan and further in view of Manduley to have included an exchange between two meters is bi-directional as taught by Manduley for the advantage of effectively transmitting and updating data between meters without the need for connecting to a remote data center.

Conclusion

57. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

The Examiner has cited particular portions of the references as applied to the claims above for the convenience of the Applicant. Although the specified citations are representative of the teachings in the art and are applied to the specific limitations within the individual claim, other passages and figures may apply as well. It is respectfully requested that the Applicant, in preparing the responses, fully consider the references in entirety as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior art or disclosed by the Examiner.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Eric Liou whose telephone number is 571-270-1359. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday, 8:00-5:00.

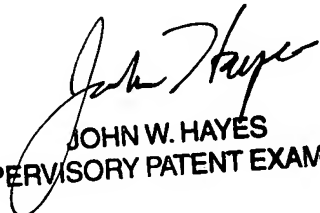
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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Hayes can be reached on 571-272-6708. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

EL


JOHN W. HAYES
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER